

Vermont Agency of Human Services

Integrating Family Services (IFS)

IFS Management Team

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**If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.**

~African Proverb

Integrating Family Services



Vision

Vermonters work together to ensure all children, youth and families have the resources they need to reach their fullest potential.

Mission

Integrating Family Services brings state government and local communities together to ensure holistic and accountable planning, support, and service delivery aimed at meeting the needs of Vermont's children, youth and families.

Why Integrate?



- ❑ The Agency of Human Services' six departments and community-based service providers operate within program and funding silos. The service gaps and inflexibility resulting from these silos make it difficult to effectively meet the needs of Vermont's children, youth and families.
- ❑ Integrating Family Services changes this by breaking down those silos and shifting strategic planning, practice, language, service delivery and other key aspects of Vermont's human services system so the resources available to children, youth and families better match their needs.

What happens with an Integrating Family Services Approach?



- Children's, youth and family services come together in an integrated and seamless continuum.
- Service providers meet family needs as they become known.
- Families can access supports and services based on need rather than program eligibility criteria.
- State partners shift their focus from counting clients and service units to measuring the impact of those services.

Integrating Family Services Regions

Two regions have implemented the IFS approach:

- ✓ Addison County ~ July, 2012
- ✓ Franklin/Grand Isle ~ April, 2014



Early Indicators of Success

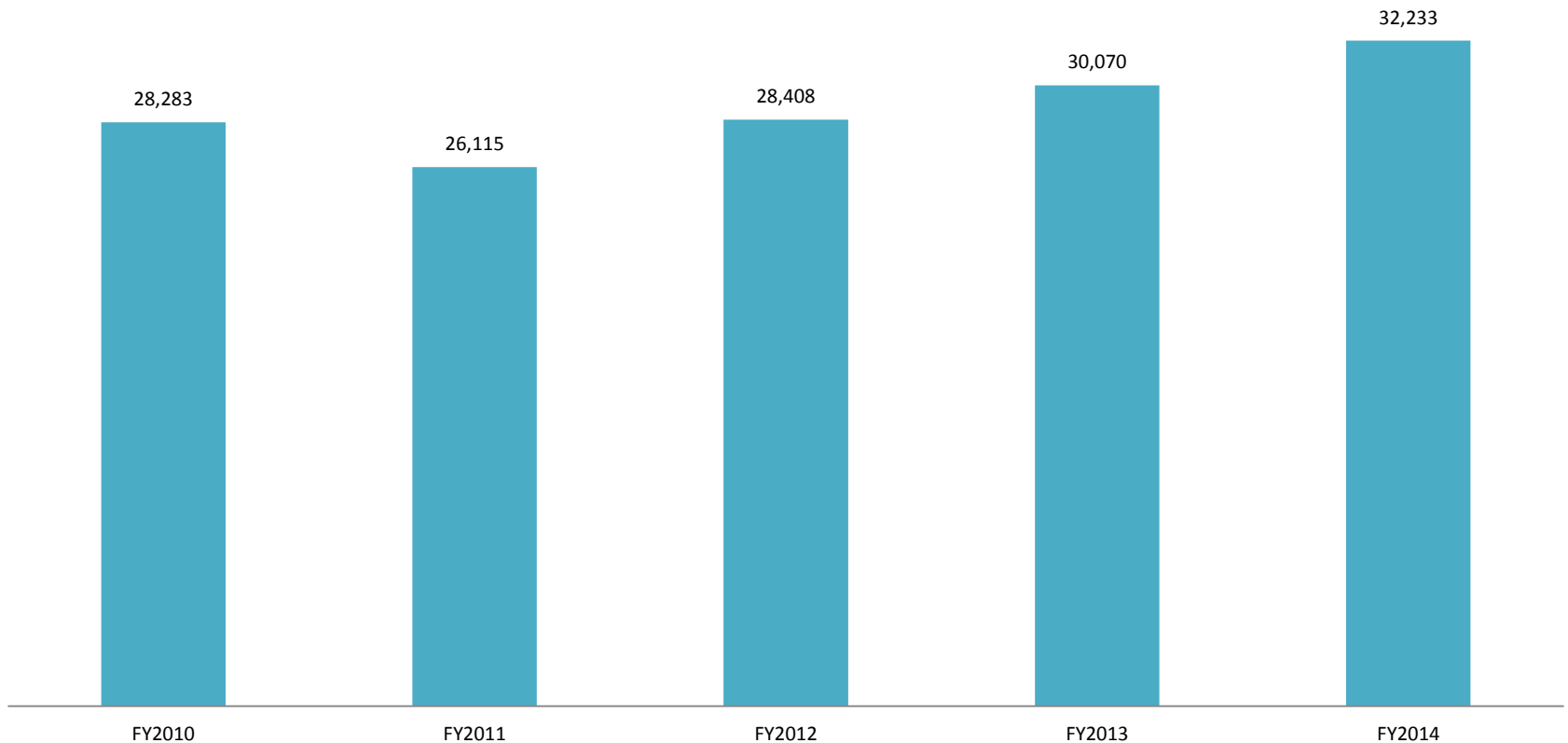
WHAT ARE THE DATA TELLING US?



How Much?

Addison - Total Hours of Service Provided

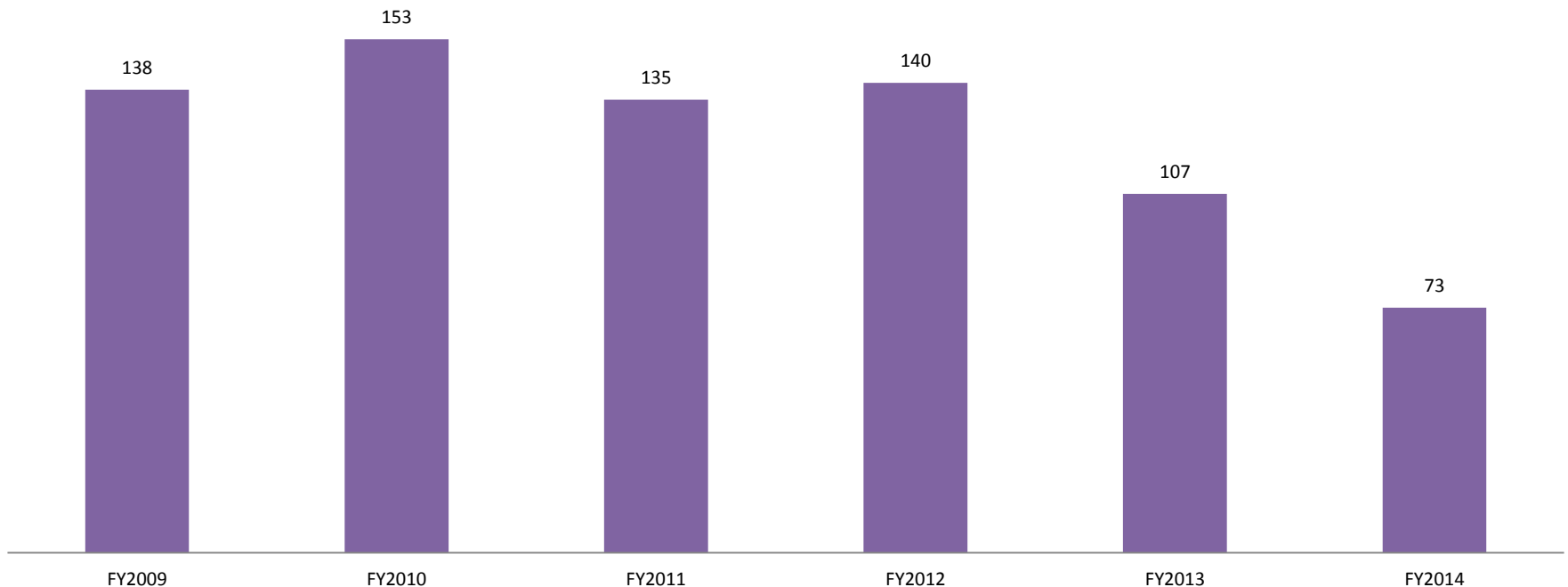
The first year of IFS in Addison was FY12. With the same level of funding they have been able to steadily increase the number of service hours they are providing.



Is Anyone Better Off?

Addison-Crisis Interventions

Since IFS implementation, there has been a nearly 50% decrease in crisis interventions needed for children because the community now has the flexibility to provide supports and services earlier than they were able to under the traditional fee-for-service model.



Elements of the IFS Model



Key Components of Leadership & Governance



- Documented governance and leadership structures at the local and state level that create a clear decision-making authority and process
- Clear roles and responsibilities of teams and boards operating within IFS
- Family voice embedded in all forms of decision-making
- Formal alignment and direction across all AHS initiatives related to children, youth and families
- Plan for and implement IFS expansion

What we mean by governance

Governance refers to how programs and entities are managed to promote efficiency, excellence, and equity.

It comprises the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how *power is exercised*, how *constituents are given voice*, and how *decisions are made* on issues of mutual concern.*

*Source: B.U.I.L.D. Initiative

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Early%20Childhood%20Governance%20for%20Web.pdf>

Why Governance Matters

Governance sets the priorities for a project, which is needed for the management of resources. Without governance, some form of anarchy results, with stakeholders moving from crisis to crisis, only capable of responding to the loudest, most powerful voice or the most serious emergency.*

*Establishing Governance for Health and Human Services Interoperability Initiatives, A Handbook for States, Illinois Framework, 2013

Other Reasons Governance Matters

To prompt your thinking about the discussion questions that follow – and not to limit it – consider these aspects of governance:

- Accountability – who is accountable for what?
- Roles and responsibilities – who does what?
- Decision making – how are decisions made?

Some Challenges to Cross Sector Governance

- Acknowledging that coordination of services along a continuum is not the same thing as collaboration;
- Initially underestimate amount of 'self-consciousness' it takes for systems to achieve collaboration around complex problems of families and communities;
- Deeply embedded values in law and policy that reward individualism and push toward risk aversion, pathology focused, and adversarial relationships threaten sustainability of gains;
- Governance structures that are designed, resourced and evaluated around the logic of individualism and the underlying ethic of winner take all competition are the problem.

Principle-driven, Relationship-focused, Accountable Governance Structures

- What underlying values do we want ‘governance’ to advance?
- “The challenge is to envision structures and ways of working at a governance level that meets these needs” [Lewellyn, 2014]
- Beyond service and resource coordination to the use of common principles to orient, drive and animate all decisions and activities;
- Simultaneous requirements for responsiveness [building capacities in relationships] and fidelity [accountability and reproducibility]

Governance Grounded in Relational Theory

- Relationship focused
- Comprehensive/Holistic
- Contextual/Flexible
- Subsidiarity, Inclusion and Participation
- Dialogical or Communicative
- Democratic/Deliberative
- Forward-focused, Solution-focused/Problem-solving

[From Jennifer Llewellyn, 2014]

Discussion Question 1.

What are the current or potential challenges related to IFS governance – either at the state or local level?

Discussion Question 2.

What can the IFS management or leadership teams do to help overcome these challenges?

Discussion Question 3.

**What can the IFS teams in
the communities do to
overcome these challenges?**

What's Next ...

- a. Summary of key discussion points sent out**
- b. Survey monkey distributed for feedback**
- c. Next call on April 28**
Topic: Strengthening Families